THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) is planning to mobilize upto Rs. 300 crores under debt instruments during 2000-01, depending upon availability of internal resources and market conditions, for the Kandla/Jamnagar-Loni Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) Pipeline Project and the LPG Processing Complex at Gandhar.

(c) Apart from the on-going projects viz. Kandla/Jamnagar-Loni LPG Pipeline, LPG Processing Complex at Gandhar, Light-End Fraction (LEF) Compressor at Vijaipur and laying of pipelines for transportation of natural gas, GAIL proposes to take up LPG Pipeline network in the Southern region.

IOC's State in Balal Oilfield in Iran

3625. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation has approached French Multinational ELF to acquire 35 per cent stake in the Balal Oilfield in Iran;

(b) if so, the details thereof with objectives behind such move;

(c) what amount is likely to be invested in U.S. Dollar in the project;

(d) whether the project would ensure additional supply of crude oil in the country; and

(e) if so, the quantum of same with extraction price involved in it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (e) Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has held discussion with ELF Aquitaine regarding its interest in participation in the Balal oil field in Iran with the objective to source equity oil from abroad. No agreement in this regard has been signed. However, IOC and ELF have entered into MoU for collaboration in selected areas including research and development.

GAIL's plan to enter Telecom Sector

3626. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the GAIL is planning to enter the telecom sector;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;